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REVIEW OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN FIELDS WITH WHICH THE SUB-COMMISSION HAS BEEN CONCERNED

Report submitted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

[24 July 1995]

1. Under its programme for the promotion and dissemination of international human rights instruments, UNESCO has translated the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) into three languages used in South Africa: Zulu, Khosa and Sotho. There can be no doubt that knowing the text in their own languages will help the peoples concerned to defend their rights and to combat any lingering racism in South Africa more effectively.

2. UNESCO took part in the Seminar on exclusion, equality before the law and non-discrimination organized by the Secretariat of the Council of Europe in collaboration with Intercentre of Messina, at Taormina-Mare (Italy), from 29 September to 1 October 1994. It may be of interest to summarize the wide-ranging debate, which centred on the following three topics: identification of the main phenomena of exclusion; efforts to combat exclusion phenomena and the law; the need to find genuine solutions to exclusion.

1. Identification of the main phenomena of exclusion

3. It became evident that these phenomena were widespread and diverse. The field of exclusion covered the unemployed, the elderly, the physically and mentally handicapped and drug addicts. The Seminar also considered the situation of women, ethnic minorities (particularly Gypsies) and foreigners. It was also noted that there were cases where people suffered from more than one handicap and where exclusion could be said to be reproduced from generation to generation, creating a real vicious circle. It was also pointed out that exclusion could have a spatial aspect, some districts and suburbs of towns being more particularly reserved for excluded groups.

2. Efforts to combat exclusion phenomena and the law

4. The general idea was that the law, although it could do much to combat exclusion, could not be enough on its own to eliminate this evil completely, particularly since the relationship between the law and exclusion situations could be a complex one.

5. Situations were identified in which excluded groups were without rights, such as housing, health and compensation for loss of resources. It was also noted that there were cases where the law was disregarded in dealings with certain groups of the population, such as tramps, the handicapped, etc.

6. Reference was also made to cases of bogus rights, e.g. to housing, the right of excluded groups to housing being recognized in a purely theoretical way, but care taken to avoid drawing any practical consequences.

3. Efforts to find genuine solutions to exclusion

7. It was considered that the first thing to be done in order to find solutions was to make a thorough analysis of the different phenomena covered by such terms as "exclusion", "new poor", "fourth world", or "persons of no fixed abode". Better knowledge of exclusion phenomena ought to enable Governments and the media to adopt policies better suited to the different situations. It was noted that it was extremely important to give proper training in social matters to those with responsibilities in this area, such as judges, policemen, etc.

8. Against this background, the participants agreed that society should go out to meet excluded groups, without waiting for them to ask, in providing for the specific needs of this or that category: the unemployed, the homeless, AIDS sufferers, Gypsies, foreigners, etc.

9. The proceedings of the Seminar on exclusion, equality before the law and non-discrimination were published by the Council of Europe in 1995.

10. UNESCO and the Centre for Studies on Turkey (Germany) organized, in cooperation with the National Commissions for UNESCO of Germany and Turkey, an international conference on "Migrants in the European Union: Between

integration and xenophobia" in Bonn, Germany, on 14 and 15 November 1994. The main emphasis of the Conference was the development of several approaches for the protection and integration of migrants in the countries of the European Union, particularly in view of the increasing violence against these groups.

11. UNESCO participated in the International Conference against Racism, Violence and Discrimination (8-11 June 1995, Schlaining Castle, Burgenland, Austria), organized by the Austrian Commission for UNESCO, the European University Centre for Peace Studies (EPU), the Institute for Human Biology, University of Vienna and the Federal Ministry for Science, Research and Art of Austria, in the framework of the International Year for Tolerance.

12. The Conference concentrated on five major items:

Theories of genetic foundation and determinants of human existence as race-biological consequences;

Current factors and causes of racism, violence and intolerance and how they can be curbed;

"New" racism and national socialism - perspectives and possible solutions from social science, natural science and cultural studies;

International and intra-societal problems of violence - causes and patterns;

For a culture of peace and democracy - conditions and options for the overcoming of racism, violence, and intolerance.

13. With its Amerindia programme launched in 1989, UNESCO has set up specific programmes for indigenous peoples, focusing mainly on the promotion of machinery for dialogue and consultation with a view to mutual understanding between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples (San Cristobal de las Casas, 1991; Ottawa, 1991; Oaxaca, 1993; Campeche, 1993).

14. UNESCO's pilot project on the Mayan world had centred on the preservation of the Mayan heritage and the cultural development of peoples of Mayan origin, special emphasis being placed on the development of local communities through cultural tourism.

15. Activities have also been undertaken with regard to the intangible cultural heritage of indigenous groups: grammars have been published for traditional languages that are under threat, such as Nahuatl, Guaraní and Quechua.

16. In 1993 the International Year for the World's Indigenous Pecples gave UNESCO a new opportunity to step up its activities in this field by creating a network of regular relations and consultations between indigenous and non-indigenous groups, Governments and non-governmental organizations. In its

activities, UNESCO took into account the changes that had occurred in international relations, which entail adjustments in societies at all levels, and the importance of dialogue and exchanges on an equal footing in multicultural societies.

17. The International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which the General Assembly of the United Nations proclaimed in December 1993, gives pride of place to the need for consultations on a basis of equality between indigenous and non-indigenous peoples. With this in mind, a plan of action covering all the organization's fields of competence is being drawn up; it is concerned in particular with public information and awareness activities designed to improve knowledge of indigenous peoples' cultures, ways of life and aspirations.

18. To mark the launching of the Decade, the second Forum of the Indigenous Peace Initiative was held at UNESCO headquarters. This Forum, which was chaired by Mrs. Rogoberta Menchú Tum, the 1992 Nobel Prize winner, was attended by a hundred or so representatives of indigenous peoples of Latin America, Asia, Australia, Canada, Northern Europe and the United States, mainly from the fields of education and human rights.

19. UNESCO's activities in this field are designed to strengthen the endogenous capacities of indigenous peoples by giving active support to their initiatives. Special efforts will in particular be devoted to the preparation of bilingual and multicultural education programmes, to the protection and promotion of their physical and intangible heritage and to support for specialized training of craftsmen in management and marketing of their own production. Technical assistance will also be given to indigenous communities for the protection of their cultural heritage.

20. In addition, in the scientific field, particular attention will be given to the specific knowledge indigenous peoples have of their environment in the preservation of their ecological systems, through initiatives launched under UNESCO programmes such as MAB (Man and Biosphere) and programmes of the United Nations University.

21. UNESCO also played an active part in inter-agency consultations organized in order to improve collaboration on a common agenda for the Decade.

22. It may be noted, finally, that at the twenty-eighth session of the General Conference, at the end of 1995, the Director-General of UNESCO will submit his overall report on the implementation of the UNESCO Declaration on Race and Racial Prejudice (1978).

23. In connection with the establishment of an intercultural dialogue, UNESCO has also contributed to the safeguarding of heritage common to more than one culture and to the promotion of artistic expression by groups or persons belonging to different cultural communities.

24. Pilot projects have been implemented to promote cultural expression by nomadic ethnic groups. The general idea is to show that their cultures, by reason of their originality and the inventiveness that goes with their adaptability represent sources of enrichment for mankind. These pilot

projects are intended to reveal, among other things, the forces at work in these societies, and particularly the role played by women as pillars of the domestic economy, regulators of social equilibrium and managers of the collective identity. It is also planned to produce supporting material, in the form of information kits using photographs and audio-visual media.

25. In addition, UNESCO has made an intellectual contribution at the request of research institutions and multicultural or inter-cultural centres involved in day-to-day efforts to deal with marginalization and social exclusion due to cultural discrimination, which affects minorities in particular. Similarly, moral, technical and occasionally financial support has been given for the launching and coordination of projects on religious or cultural convergences within different multi-ethnic nations with a view to consolidating cultural pluralism at the national or subregional level.